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MARIA WEIDNER: I'm Maria Weidner, so.

HOLMES BROWN: Please step up. Bob Halstead should follow you.

1 MARIA WEIDNER: My name is Maria Weidner, I'm the energy associate for the Ohio Public Industry Research Group. And I'm here to testify today on the Draft EIS. Nuclear waste is the deadliest substance known to humans. A few seconds exposure to a radiated fuel rod causes cancer and in a few minutes death. Common sense dictates that we treat this material with the utmost caution to protect human health and the environment. Any decision regarding this radioactive waste must be based on sound science and protecting the public. Instead, nuclear waste policy in this country has been driven by the unsafe policies promoted by the nuclear industry and unwise legislation promoted by industry allies.

Political expediency has replaced responsible stewardship and a sound science and decision making is ignored at the request of the nuclear industry. We are disappointed that the Department of Energy has chosen to continue this trend as evidenced in its continued refusal to follow its own guidelines and disqualify Yucca Mountain while simultaneously seeking to weaken the guidelines and in this Draft EIS. This Draft EIS is an expensive rubber stamp for the Yucca Mountain waste dump. It is not the careful conservative analysis of public safety and environmental issues required of a public agency.

2 Despite mounting evidence to the contrary, the DOE insists that Yucca Mountain is a suitable location for dumping high-level radioactive waste. In the Draft EIS, the DOE downplays or ignores important data about rain water and ground water flow and contaminant transport. The DOE claims that the data on ground water flow is incomplete. Yet, a study on Chlorine 36, which shows much faster ground water travel times, was published in September 1997 and has been largely ignored.

3 The DOE has said it considers it unlikely that an earthquake would strike the Yucca Mountain region. Yet 33 faults are known to exist within and adjacent to the site and more than
4 600 seismic events have occurred within a 50 mile radius of Yucca Mountain since 1976. The transportation of nuclear waste to Yucca Mountain, a task that is estimated to take 30 years and over 100,000 shipments through 43 states, has not been analyzed sufficiently in the Draft EIS which does not consider actual transport routes.

5 The DOE has yet to prove that the casks that will carry the nuclear waste are even suitable for actual highway or railway transport. The casks have not yet been physically tested constructed to withstand impact against an immovable object at 30 miles per hour. The current casks were clearly not designed for speeds that would be considered even moderate by highway
6 or railway standards. The Draft EIS does not consider the complete ramifications of an accident involving a shipment of high-level radioactive waste. If the DOE intends to move thousands of potentially lethal shipments past the work places, homes and schools of over 50 million Americans, ourselves included, then thorough analyses and preparation are in order.

The DOE's own estimates suggest that at least 50 in as many as 310 accidents could occur during the shipment of radioactive waste by way of comparison, according to the U.S. Department of Transportation's hazardous materials information system. In the last 10 years we've had 7,190 hazardous waste materials releases. That's not radioactive, this is other hazardous materials releases. Due to transportation related accidents with a price tag of \$10,698,598. While radioactive waste clearly cannot stay where it is for perpetuity. It is imperative that the matter of where to put it is handled in such a way that the ultimate safety of the public and the environment is the focus.

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The DOE's current EIS puts the interest in the nuclear industry first. Moving nuclear waste across the country through rural and urban areas in casks not fully tested, to a geologically unstable site situated directly above a vitally important up front needlessly threatens public health and the environment. The nuclear industry and the DOE has expressed urgency and the need to deal with this issue. We agree, but the very real problem of what to do with the tens of thousands of radioactive waste looms before us. Yet not the DOE nor the nuclear industry have taken real steps to prevent this pollution in the future.

Our energy policy should focus on protecting the environment and the public. This means dealing responsibly with highly radioactive waste from existing nuclear power plants and preventing future radioactive contamination by shifting efforts towards renewable energy options like wind and solar that don't endanger our families and communities not to mention generations for the millennium to come. The DOE should reject the Yucca Mountain site and work to develop and implement nuclear waste policies based on sound science and protecting the public health instead of nuclear industry companies.

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And finally, Ohio PIRG would like to submit on the record that we are disappointed and dismayed at the DOE's presentation on the DEIS as well as the question and answer section were not included in the public record. We believe that the concerns of the community and the DOE's response to these or lack thereof are an important part of this process that has been willfully kept from the people that weren't able to make it here today.